

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (CA-39) today joined Congresswoman Loretta Sánchez (CA-46) and other U.S. House of Representative Democrats in support of the "Homeland Security Block Grant Act of 2003," H.R. 1007. Congresswoman Linda Sánchez is an original co-sponsor of the bill.

This legislation will offer block grants that will go directly to communities to provide the necessary funding for local first responders including our police and fire departments. Specifically, the bill would provide \$3.5 billion in funding for communities across the country.

"Our local police, firefighters, and emergency personnel are the first lines of defense in our communities. Last year, Congress increased funding for these departments. However, earlier this month the National League of Cities and the U.S Conference of Mayors estimated that cities have yet to be reimbursed for at least billion in incurred homeland security expenses," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

"Even more disturbing is the fact that many departments are under staffed as a result of National Guard and military reserve call-ups. The National League of Cities estimates that three-quarters of our cities have lost police officers, firefighters, and other first responders to serve in the war on terrorism," Sánchez continued.

"In addition to staff shortages, first responders lack necessary equipment to respond to a biological or chemical attack. This is unacceptable. Now more than ever, we need to make sure that all of our police, fire, and emergency personnel have the resources, and equipment they need to protect our families and communities," Sánchez concluded.